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First Named Inventor: Zine-Eddine Boutaghout

Application No.: 09/884,796

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1. An air bearing slider comprising:  
a transducer for communicating with a disc; and  
means for supporting the transducer so that the transducer is at a closest position with respect to the disc during flight.

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2. (Amended) An air bearing slider comprising:  
a transducer having a pole tip for communicating with a disc;  
a composite slider body with a front portion composed of a first material and a rear portion composed of a second material, the slider body having an air bearing surface defined on a disc opposing face of the slider body, where the air bearing surface comprises the front portion and the rear portion; and  
a transducer basecoat portion attached to the rear portion of the slider body and containing the transducer;  
wherein the pole tip is at a mechanical close point with respect to the disc during flight.

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3. (Amended) The slider of claim 2, wherein an interface of the first material and the second material comprises a latitudinal plane substantially perpendicular to the air bearing surface.

4. The slider of claim 3 wherein a thickness of the first material is as much as about 15 times the thickness of the second material.

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5. (Amended) The slider of claim 3 wherein a thickness of the first material is as little as about half the thickness of the second material.

6. The slider of claim 3, wherein the transducer portion comprises the second material.

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7. The slider of claim 6, where a lapping durability of the first material is greater than a lapping durability of the second material.
8. The slider of claim 6, where the first material is AlTiC and the second material is Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.
9. A method of manufacturing a slider body which supports a transducer so that the transducer is at a closest position with respect to a disc during flight, the method comprising the steps of:
  - forming a composite wafer comprising a layer of a first material and a layer of a second material, the composite wafer comprising a plurality of joined slider bodies;
  - forming on the layer of second material a transducer basecoat portion containing a plurality of transducers, wherein at least one transducer resides on each of the slider bodies;
  - and
  - defining an air bearing surface on each slider body, the air bearing surface comprising a leading portion of the first material and a trailing portion of the second material.
10. The method of claim 9, where a lapping durability of the first material is greater than a lapping durability of the second material.
11. The method of claim 9 further comprising severing the composite wafer into a plurality of bars.
12. The method of claim 11 further comprising severing a bar into a plurality of individual sliders.
13. The method of claim 9 wherein a thickness of the first material is as much as about 15 times the thickness of the second material.